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Ken Cuccinelli: Scott Pruitt Leads the Way on Regulatory Rollback

Real Clear Policy

Ken Cuccinelli

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This month, the Environmental Protection Agency released its EPA Year in Review for 2017-2018. To call it impressive would be a gross understatement. With Administrator Scott Pruitt leading the charge, the agency has shown unrivaled commitment to carrying out the president's agenda of deregulation.

Before taking over at the EPA, Pruitt was as a leading opponent of regulatory overreach by the agency. As general of Oklahoma, for instance, he dissolved the Environmental Protection Unit and instead created a Federalism Unit to fight President Obama's aggressive regulatory agenda. He brought more than a dozen lawsuits against the EPA, fighting such rules as the Cross State Air Pollution Rule and the Clean Water Rule, and successfully challenging the Clean Power Plan.

Now, as EPA administrator, Pruitt is taking even more direct action and doing so in a cooperative and transparent manner. When Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney discussed the deregulation effort at the Conservative Political Action Conference last month, he highlighted the rules that were top priority for the administration's regulatory roll back: the Waters of the United States rule and the Clean Power Plan. Both fall within Pruitt's jurisdiction at the EPA. No surprise that action on EPA regulations has moved to the forefront of the administration's agenda.

From his first days at the agency, Pruitt took steps to facilitate cooperation with the states on environmental

policy. Federalism is an essential principle of American governance, and Pruitt has put this principle into practice. During his first year, Pruitt travelled to 30 states to discuss the EPA's work, personally meeting with 34 governors – Democrats and Republicans – as well as over 350 stakeholder groups. This level of personal involvement is nearly unparalleled, even inside an administration with such a clear focus on deregulation. And it is paying dividends.

The EPA Year in Review booklet is nearly 40 pages long, outlining the regulatory rollback, increased transparency, and government reform measures accomplished in the last year alone. This includes finalizing 22 deregulatory actions and savings of more than \$1 billion in regulatory costs, which previously fell on Americans' shoulders. By comparison, a similar document out of the Department of Labor, headed by Secretary of Labor Alexander Acosta, is only four pages long.

As he says in a letter at the front of the EPA Year in Review, Administrator Pruitt "look[s] forward to working together to accomplish even more progress in 2018." We applaud Mr. Pruitt's accomplishments in his first year as head of EPA, and hope that his success provides an example to other agencies. Executive agencies can take the lead on growing the economy by freeing Americans from excessive regulatory burdens. This, the EPA – with Pruitt at the helm – has proven.

Ken Cuccinelli is the Director of the FreedomWorks Foundation Regulatory Action Center.

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